

Study of the book of James

Part 6 - James 4:11-17; 5:1-12

1. **Part 6 – James 4:11 – 5:12 What** should be a Christian's attitude towards:

- a. Critical speech, judging others (4:11-12)
- b. Warning about self confidence (4:13-17)
- c. Wealth & Justice (5 :1-6)
- d. Patience & Endurance (5:7-12)

a. Critical speech, judging others (4:11-12)

James 4:11-12 Do not speak evil against one another, brothers. The one who speaks against a brother or judges (Kriino) his brother, speaks evil against the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge (Krites). 12 There is only one lawgiver and judge, he who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you to judge your neighbor?

In James 4:1 James begins by saying - What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions (evil desires) are at war within you? 2 You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask. 3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.

- “Evil desires” are those selfish desires that cause you to want to be always right or in control. These “evil desires” are the reason why you are so easily offended, and you feel like you have to say something or correct someone all the time.

Paul says in 1 Corinthians 3:1 “Dear brothers and sisters, when I was with you I couldn't talk to you as I would to spiritual people. I had to talk as though you belonged to this world or as though you were infants in Christ. 2 I had to feed you with milk, not with solid food, because you weren't ready for anything stronger. And you still aren't ready, 3 for you are still controlled by your sinful nature. You are jealous of one another and quarrel with each other. Doesn't that prove you are controlled by your sinful nature? Aren't you living like people of the world?”

- **So, what is causing the quarrels and fights** ? It could be between a couple, siblings, parents and children, colleagues or church members.

- It is because we are controlled by sinful nature- evil desires (selfish desires, carnal, pointing to self)
- Evil desires – are persistently at war within us. This is a military language. Your “evil desires” are engaged in a military campaign against you and what God wants for your life.

What about the evil desires?

First, your “evil desires” are pleasure focused. Your “evil desires” are self-seeking. Makes you to kill someone, covet someone. Even praying – motives are wrong as it is self directed.

- Evil desires are shown in words(speech), action & thoughts
- Verses 7-12 we are told how to combat this urge to argue and fight. James exhorts us - Submit yourself before God; Resist the devil; Draw near to God; (friendship with the world is enmity with God) ; Cleanse your hands; purify your hearts ; Be wretched, mourn & weep; humble yourself .

Secondly, evil desires make you judge others and leads to critical speech.

Never judge another person. You don’t know what the other person is going through or what they have been through. You don’t know their complete background. We need to be quick to listen and slow to speak (slow to make conclusions)

James 4:11,12

To “speak evil against” (katalaleo) refers to the mindless, thoughtless, carelessness, critical, derogatory, untrue statements directed against others. It has a malicious intent to it. This is where you say things to be hateful, spiteful, mean, cruel, or hurtful in some way. The idea is to tear someone down behind their back. This is sometimes translated slander.

To “criticize and judge” (krino) others is to condemn them. The Greek word for “judge” is krino and can also be translated as “to pronounce an opinion concerning right and wrong, condemn, to be of opinion, deem, resolve, decree, summoned to trial that one's case may be examined and judgment passed upon it. You are criticizing them, slamming them, cutting them down, and saying things about them that you don’t know if its actually true or not.

Mathew 7:1 “Do not judge, or you too will be judged. 2 For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

John 7:24 Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.

1 Cor 4:5 Therefore, do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God.

1 Cor 4:4 For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord.

Romans 14:10 Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God; 12 So then each of us will give an account of himself to God. 13 Therefore let us not pass judgment on one another any longer, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother

Colossians 2:16 Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day.

James 2:13 There will be no mercy for those who have not shown mercy to others. But if you have been merciful, God will be merciful when he judges you.

Does that mean you should cover someone who you know is not living/ doing according to the standards of the word of God? Tolerate sin? Flattery?

The Bible asks us the need to evaluate in these circumstances:

Godly constructive criticism – pray about it – First take the beam out of your eye before helping someone else take the speck out of theirs. Always go to the person directly – humbly speak to them along with encouragement. The aim is to build them up, get them back on track. Pray for them.

Teachings:

Acts 17:11 These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily (Anakrino) to find out whether these things were so. (Anakrino means to examine or judge, to investigate, enquire into, scrutinise, sift, question specifically in a forensic sense of a judge to hold an investigation. to interrogate, examine the accused or witnesses)

1 John 4:1 Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

1 Corinthians 10: 15 I speak as to sensible people; judge (Krino) for yourselves what I say

1 Cor 14:29 Let the prophets speak two or three and let the other judge (and let the others weigh what is said- Diakrino). For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted. 3 For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints. (Diakrino – make distinction, discern, debate, evaluate, careful regard)

James 4:11-12 Do not speak evil against one another, brothers. The one who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks evil against the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge (Krites). 12 There is only one lawgiver and judge, he who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you to judge your neighbor?

James says by judging others, you are :

1) judging the law. What is the law? Love your neighbour as yourself . You think the law is no good. Setting yourself above it.

2)taking the place of judge (There is only one lawgiver and judge, he who is able to save and to destroy). Krites is used of a Roman procurator administering justice.

Hebrew 11:11 By faith also Sarah herself did receive power to conceive seed, and she bare after the time of life, seeing she did judge Him faithful who did promise

We see in *Genesis 18:10,12* And he said, I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son. And Sarah heard it in the tent door, which was behind him. Sarah at first treated the divine message with ridicule (Gen 18:12) , judging it to be absolutely impossible, not knowing then that it was from God; and this her age and circumstances justified, for, humanly speaking, such an event was impossible: but, when she knew that it was God who said this, it did not doubt any more, but believed that what God had promised he was able to perform. She conceived and bore a son (Gen 21: 2)

- Examine (documents), proper careful assessment and give your sentence – like the court
- Analysed her body's situation and looked at God's track record of faithfulness and then judged God to be faithful .

- That's why she received the power to conceive seed, she bare after the time of life.
- Kairos time – right opportune time

Can we judge our God to be faithful in our situations?

b. Warning about self confidence (4:13-17) / Christian businessmen & women/believers :

James 4:13-17 Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit"— 14 yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. 15 Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that." 16 As it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. 17 So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.

The first century was a period of great commercial activity, Jews involved in business. James is addressing the rich people within the church and outside the church. Jews are pretty smart, excellent in handling finances, top business owners. (10 wealthiest Jews who are billionaires in the Forbes list. Jews make up 0.2% of the world, yet 18% of the top 50 billionaires)

- James is not talking against making money or business, but talks about arrogance, pride.
- Money, wealth, profit in itself is never a sin.
- But wealth can bring pride (*Math 6:24 "No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money (Mammona - riches/ property)*)
- Self dependency – my hard work, my effort, (*James 4:6 God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. He gives it generously*). They think they have control of their business and wealth.
- Recognise God as the source of all wealth.
- Don't work/ run a business with God outside the picture.
- Be aware that you don't know what tomorrow holds.
- Remember that we are mist/ puff of smoke – appears for little time and then vanishes. Like a flower, a wave in the ocean.
- Don't leave God out of any planning, any strategy, any business idea. Dependence on God should be the key. God should take the central stage. Building of God's kingdom & His name to be glorified. Giving God the permission to even alter your plans.
- Abraham was a wealthy man, very wealthy in livestock and in silver and gold. (Gen 13:2). Moved from place to place, pitched his tent with all herds, children whenever God asked him. BUILT AN ALTAR & WORSHIPPED, CALLED UPON THE NAME OF THE Lord.

Verse 17 : You sin if you know the good you need to do but fail to do- the sin of omission. Don't waste opportunities of doing good. Take the effort.

c. Wealth & Justice (5 :1-6)

James 5: Come now, you rich, weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon you. 2 Your riches have rotted and your garments are moth-eaten. 3 Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. You have laid up treasure in the last days.

4 Behold, the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud(robbed), are crying out against you, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. 5 You have lived on the earth in luxury and in self-indulgence.

You have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter. 6 You have condemned and murdered the righteous person. He does not resist you.

- Warning to those misusing wealth. Money is not the root of all evil but the love of money. It depends where your heart is, the motive and the purpose.
- Your riches have rotted and your garments are moth-eaten. 3 Your gold and silver is cankered (covered with rust) ; and the rust (poison) of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Fire consumes things faster.
- Don't lead a self indulgent, luxurious, lifestyle. Be good stewards of money. Recognise God as the source of every blessing .
- God wants us to be good stewards of money.
- We don't want to hoard our riches to rot or eaten by moths. Give away what we can when the Lord leads you and bless someone.
- The wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud(robbed), are crying out (krazo- crying out loud, cry of a raven) against you, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the **Lord of hosts (Jehovah Saboath - Lord** of the armies of Israel, as those who are under the leadership and protection of Jehovah .
- Don't hold their pay back. Maybe they depend on that to feed their family, their needs.
- **Deuteronomy 24:14,15** *"You shall not oppress a hired worker who is poor and needy, whether he is one of your brothers or one of the sojourners who are in your land within your towns. 15 You shall give him his wages on the same day, before the sun sets (for he is poor and counts on it), lest he cry against you to the Lord, and you be guilty of sin.*

d. Patience & Endurance (5:7-12)

James 5:7-12 Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. 8 You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. 9 Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door. 10 As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. 11 Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast. You have heard of the steadfastness of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful.

12 But above all, my brothers, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or by any other oath, but let your “yes” be yes and your “no” be no, so that you may not fall under condemnation.

- Be patient - to be of a long spirit, not to lose heart, to be longsuffering, slow to anger, slow to punish/ avenge.
- Farmer waits for precious fruit of earth- no other solution, no other source of water. Waits until he receives former rain (sowing) latter rain (harvesting) .
- Active waiting not passive – even when situation or persons are not changing.
- Judge is at the door (close by) . There may be injustice in workplace, family but wait patiently. Don't take things into your hands.
- Prophets who endured in the Bible. (Prophet Isaiah & Jeremiah)
- *Endurance – to bear under to stay under (behind), remain; tarry behind*

Do not swear - Yes be yes and no be no – Math 5:35-37 But I say to you, Do not take an oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, ³⁵ or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. ³⁶ And do not take an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. ³⁷ Let what you say be simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No’; anything more than this comes from evil.

Your words should carry weight, certain value. Otherwise don't say it. Your 'yes' should be 'yes' and 'no' should be 'no'.

One mere word should be utterly trustworthy as a signed document legally correct and complete – Mittan